Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OUAGAD 03050 130851Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 EB-08 TRSE-00 AGRE-00 OMB-01
IO-13 /096 W
----------019372 132241Z /61
R 130806Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4680
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L OUAGADOUGOU 3050

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, MARR, EAID, UV
SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT LAMIZANA

1. I CALLED ON PRESIDENT LAMIZANA AFTERNOON AUGUST 11. ENSUING CONVERSATION WHICH LASTED ONE HOUR AND COVERED VARIED SUBJECTS WAS EXTREMELY CORDIAL AND CANDID. FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS GIVE HIGHLIGHTS OF PRESIDENT'S REMARKS WHICH HE EITHER VOLUNTEERED OR GAVE IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTIONS.

2. FOOD SITUATION IN UPPER VOLTA: PRESIDENT ASKED ME TO CONVEY TO US GOVERNMENT HIS PERSONAL THANKS AND GRATITUDE OF VOLTAN PEOPLE FOR FOOD AID ALREADY PROVIDED IN FORM OF 4,700 TONS OF SORGHUM GRITS AND FOR 5,000 TONS OF SORGHUM AWAITING SHIPMENT FROM ABIDJAN. HE SAID HE WAS MOST IMPRESSED BY SPEED WITH WHICH U.S. GOVERNMENT HAD RESPONDED BY GOUV'S
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 OUAGAD 03050 130851Z

APPEAL THEREBY ENSURING THAT CEREALS WOULD ARRIVE WHEN THEY WERE MOST NEEDED. IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION, PRESIDENT REMARKED THAT, ALTHOUGH FOOD SITUATION UNTIL NEXT HARVEST WOULD REMAIN DIFFICULT, UPPER VOLTA SHOULD BE ABLE TO MANAGE WITH FOOD AID ALREADY PROMISED BY VARIOUS DONORS.

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

3. 1977 HARVEST: PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE WAS GREATLY
ENCOURAGED BY GOOD RAINS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY SINCE
LATE JULY. IF UPPER VOLTA EXPERIENCED NORMAL RAINFALL
UNTIL EARLY OCTOBER, 1977 HARVEST SHOULD BE ADEQUATE
TO SATISFY THE COUNTRY'S CEREAL NEEDS UNTIL 1978 HARVEST.

4. RELATIONS WITH MALI AND CEAO DEFENSE PACT: I ASKED
PRESIDENT WHAT PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN SETTLING BORDER
DISPUTE WITH MALI. LAMIZANA SAID THAT UPPER VOLTA'S
RELATIONS WITH MALI WERE NOW "EXTREMELY CORDIAL" AND
THAT HE DID NOT EXPECT BORDER DISPUTE TO PLARE-UP AGAIN
IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. MALI HAD SIGNED THE CEAO
NON-AGRESSION AND MUTUAL DEFENSE PACT AND COLONEL MOUSSA
TRAORE WAS NOW PRESIDENT OF THE CEAO. THIS HAD
BEEN A MOST ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENT AS FAR AS UPPER VOLTA
WAS CONCERNED AND THERE WERE GOOD REASONS TO BELIEVE THAT
MALI WAS AT LAST EMBARKING ON A MORE MODERATE COURSE.
PERHAPS IN THE MONTHS AHEAD, BOTH COUNTRIES COULD
QUIETLY PROCEED WITH THE DEMARKATION OF THE BORDER AS HAD
BEEN DONE WITH GHANA. THE CEAO DEFENSE PACT, THE
PRESIDENT CONTINUED, WAS A MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT WHICH HAD A
GOOD CHANCE OF STABLIZING THE SITUATION IN WEST AFRICA. HE HOPED
THAT OTHER "LIKE-MINDED" NATIONS SUCH AS SIERRA LEONE AND GHANA
WOULD ALSO JOIN. LAMIZANA EMPHASIZED THAT ALL CEAO MEMBERS HAD
SIGNED THE PACT, AND THAT GOGO HAD ALSO SIGNED IN SPITE OF
THE FACT THAT TOGO HAD RECOGNIZED THE POLISSARIO WHICH WAS
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 OUAGAD 03050 130851Z

ENGAGED IN MILITARY ACTION AGAINST MAURITANIA.

5. RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE: I ASKED LAMIZANA WHETHER
THE NEW DRAFT CONSTITUTION HAD BEEN APPROVED BY THE GOVERNMENT.
HE SAID IT HAD BEEN APPROVED AND THAT THE TEXT WOULD BE RELEASED
SHORTLY. HE ALSO EXPECTED THAT LEGALIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES
WOULD BE ANNOUNCED IN A FEW WEEKS. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT HE WAS
NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT FUTURE CONDITIONS UNDER CIVILIAN RULE. HE HAD
HOPED THAT NEW AND YOUNGER LEADERSHIP WOULD EMERGE IN ALL THE
FORMER POLITICAL PARTIES AND THAT A CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT OF
NATIONAL UNITY COULD BE FORMED UNDER THIS NEW LEADERSHIP. IT
APPEARED NOW THAT ALL THE OLD POLITICIANS WHO HAD BEEN
DISCREDITED IN 1966 AND AGAIN IN 1974 WERE DETERMINED
TO RETURN TO POWER, HAVING LEARNED NOTHING FROM PAST
EVENTS, MANY PEOPLE SAID THAT HE, LAMIZANA, HAD BEEN TOO SOFT
WITH THOSE POLITICIANS. IT WAS TRUE THAT HE HAD TRIED TO MAINTAIN
A CLIMATE OF MODERATION IN WHICH THE VOLTAN PEOPLE COULD ENJOY
BASIC FREEDOMS. PERHAPS WHAT THE OLD POLITICIANS NEEDED AS A
STRONG DICTATOR WHO WOULD MAKE THEM TOW THE LINE. PERHAPS
THEY WOULD NOW GET A DICTATOR EITHER CIVILIAN OR MILIARY WHO WOULD
NOT STAND FOR THEIR PETTY MANEUVERS AND RIVALRIES. THE PRESIDENT
ONLY HOPED THAT THIS DICTATOR, IF HE CAME, WOULD LET HIM LIVE

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

PEACEFULLY IN RETIREMENT. ONE THING HE WAS SURE OF WAS THAT
THIS DICTATOR WOULD NOT BE EX-PRESIDENT MAURICE YAMEOGO. POUNDING
THE TABLE (WHICH I HAVE NEVER SEEN HIM DO BEFORE, LAMIZANA SAID
THAT HE WOULD NEVER LET MAURICE YAMEOGO RUN AS A CANDIDATE FOR
THE PRESIDENCY. HE KNEW THAT THE FORMER PRESIDENT WAS VERY ACTIVE
AND WAS SEEING A LOT OF PEOPLE. HE ALSO KNEW THAT YAMEOGO
HAD RECEIVED AMPLE FUNDS FOR HIS POLITICAL CAMPAIGN FROM IVORY
COAST PRESIDENT HOUPHONET-BOIGNY. LAMIZANA HAD TOLD HOUPHOUET TIME
AND AGAIN THAT THIS WAS A WASTE OF TIME AND MONEY. AS LONG AS
HE WAS PRESIDENT, YAMEOGO WUULD NOT BE GIVEN BACK HIS CIVIL
RIGHTS AND WOULD NOT BE A CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY. THE
PRESIDENT CONTINUED THAT, AT ANY RATE, THIS WAS NO TIME, WHILE
THE FARMERS WERE WORRIED ABOUT THEIR FOOD SUPPLY AND THEIR FUTURE
HARVEST, TO TALK ABOUT A REFERENDUM OR ELECTIONS. AFTER THE
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 OUAGAD 03050 130851Z

1977 HARVEST, IT WOULD BE TIME TO TALK POLITICS. THE ARMY HAD
PROMISED A RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE AND IT WOULD STICK TO ITS
PLEDGE.

6. SOUTHERN AFRICA: THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE WAS DELIGHTED TO
SEE THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WAS GIVEN A GREAT DEAL OF
THOUGHT AND ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. HE
HOPED THAT THE INITIATIVES TAKEN BY PRESIDENT CARTER REGARDING
RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL. HE KNEW THAT THE
PROBLEMS WERE DIFFICULT BUT EVERYTHING HAD TO BE DONE TO PREVENT
A BLOOD BATH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. THE CREATION OF A MULTI-RACIAL
SOCIETY WAS THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION.GRAHAM

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Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 13-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition History: n/a
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Review Release Date: n/a
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Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
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Secure: OPEN
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Subject: CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT LAMIZANA
TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, MARR, EAID, UV, (LAMIZANA, ABOUBACAR SANGOULE)
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22 May 2009
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